

CHALK TALK

February 2014

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Branch

London, Ontario

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President's Message

Dear Members:

I am writing this on a sunny January morning, just back from a week with my Mom on Georgian Bay. We were caught in a blizzard with road closures and mountainous drifts - took me back to my childhood in the 50's - 60's! Back then, school closures were very rare. Last week, we had hydro and food and were quite warm. We counted our blessings and reminisced together over many cups of tea and leftover Christmas treats. My mother, at 92, lives on her own and walks in good weather to Tim Hortons for coffee. Her fridge door is still plastered with "feel good" articles, pictures and positive sayings. Mine is, too! Is yours?

One of my favourite fridge magnets says, "There ain't no cloud so thick that sun ain't shinin' on the other side." Pictures of family, grandchildren and, in recent years, of our RWTO members enjoying themselves at meetings and events are posted. What a 'spirit lifter' that door is! Think of the number of times you open the door of your fridge! My door reminds me that my connections with London-Middlesex RWTO help to sustain me, give me purpose and a positive outlook. I learn something new every meeting I attend. It is heartening to know that scientists and health professionals have the research data to prove that a positive attitude nurtures good health and quality of life.

By the numbers (100+) of you who also attend each month, I can tell it works for you, too. This past fall, we have had such fun at all three of our meetings. Think back to that Hallowe'en Hoot, Holler and Howl party. The Executive and our many Committees take great pleasure in planning and presenting these events. I know you will join with me in applauding and cheering their efforts and creativity. As we begin our spring season, PLEASE consider increasing your involvement in our local Branch work. We need new volunteers for committees and most importantly, the Executive. There are positions becoming available and waiting for your talents. Come, jump in! "Let the good times continue."

Cathy Harrison, President



Dates To Remember:

Thursday, MARCH 27, 2014

bring non-perishable items for the London Food Bank

Thursday, APRIL 17, 2014

bring funds for Educational Awards

TUESDAY, MAY 20, 2014

Spring Banquet

Installation of Executive

Luncheons *contributed by Sue Scruton*

All luncheons take place at the Siloam United Church, 1240 Fanshawe Park Road East and begin at 12:00 o'clock.

Please make sure you have your money in for luncheons **TEN DAYS** before the meeting date or you will be put on a waiting list. You will be called if you are on the list.

If you have any dietary needs, please call **Sue Scruton** at **519-672-7296**.

Spring Banquet - cost is \$33.00

Ivey Spencer Leadership Centre

555 Windermere Road (519-679-4546)

Parking and entrance to the Asher's Dining Room can be found on the south side of the building.



Book Club News

contributed by Patricia Savage and Linda Smith

This year, we celebrated three years of reading with a Christmas lunch. We have continued to meet monthly and frequently used the book club bags from the London Public Library, which have provided us with a diverse supply of titles.

Our meetings are always interesting and our discussions are lively.

We read *Lady Almina* And *The Real Downton Abbey* which was interesting for those who enjoy the series. All enjoyed *The Woefield Poultry Collective* and Debbie Kaiser encouraged us to read a Stephen King book.

In October, a second book club was organized with eight members. The first start up meeting was held at the home of Linda Smith on November 13, 2013. Their first book to read was Emma Donoghue's novel, *The Room*. This group plans to take turns hosting and looks forward to plenty of stimulating conversations. Thanks to Debbie Albin for initiating this opportunity. Best wishes to Book Club 2!

London-Middlesex Cora Bailey Awards

contributed by Cathy Harrison

This fall, at each of the luncheon meetings, a Cora Bailey Award was presented to one of our membership for outstanding service and leadership. With thanks and well earned praise, President Cathy Harrison awarded the Provincial Awards to: Linda Smith in September, Patricia Savage in October and June Levy in November. They each received a framed certificate. A personal photo and short biography of each winner will be entered in the Provincial Cora Bailey Winners Book. They can be very proud of this achievement.

Policies and Procedures Handbook

contributed by Mara Hitchins

The Policies and Procedures committee has been in operation for over a year, working steadily on the production of a London-Middlesex Handbook. Committee



members, Mara Hitchins, Barbara Bain, Cathy Harrison and Patricia Savage are meeting twice a month to review the Provincial Policies and Procedures Handbook as a reference in developing a working document for this Branch.

Why are we doing this? It is necessary for the organization to follow Provincial's policies since they set the guidelines for all RWTO/OERO Branches. It is a necessary project for the Branch Executive, providing clarification and direction in their decision-making on behalf of its members. It is concise and consistent, and a tremendous help to an organization in getting the job done. A much-deserved thank you goes to the committee for their time and patience in plowing through pages and pages of information in order to produce a well thought out Handbook. The London-Middlesex Branch is growing in strength and numbers. We have volunteer members who are willing to dedicate their time to this organization. If this Handbook helps to make the work easier for them, then the time has been well spent.



Cathy Harrison, Patricia Savage, June Levy and Linda Smith

Insurance *contributed by Helen Munce*

Please contact **Helen Munce** at **519-473-2050** if you would like any information regarding Travel, Auto, Residential Insurance or the Hospital and Home Care Plan. If you have any questions regarding the Hospital and Home Care Plan, please contact Manulife. The telephone number is on the back of your membership card. If you need a claim form, let Helen know.

Please let Manulife know if you have a change of address.

Shining Star Award *contributed by Patricia Savage*

The Shining Star Award was created this year to parallel the Provincial Cora Bailey Award and to recognize local members for their excellent contributions in upholding the values and goals of "Caring and Sharing". The Award honours members who have made a long-term commitment to our association and have helped in many ways to create a successful and thriving group. Some examples are driving and encouraging our senior members, working on committees, assisting with our charities, calling members and planning events.

The first two well-known and deserving recipients were Mary Lannin-Neevel and Sharon Riley who were presented with their certificates at the May 2013 luncheon. Please keep this Award in mind as nominations will be held again in the month of April 2014.



Patricia Savage, Mary Lannin-Neevel, Sharon Riley and Cathy Harrison

Friendship Group *contributed by June Levy*

Our RWTO FRIENDSHIP GROUP has enriched our local London-Middlesex Chapter for almost a decade. Armed with a membership of sixty, we contact each other naming the next social with a plan to meet. All RWTO members are welcome to join us. From monthly breakfasts in restaurants within London, attended by any who can do so, to local theatre, celebration dinners out of the city or an occasional lunch or movie, this group emphasizes FRIENDSHIP. It provides an opportunity to deepen our contacts with each other.

S-T-R-O-N-G F-R-I-E-N-D-S-H-I-P-S mean stronger, happier retired women teachers.



Barbara Bain and Linda Smith having a barrel full of fun during our Friendship Group Trip to Niagara Falls, November 26, 2013.

RWTO/OERO Online Website

You can find out about our activities and see fabulous pictures from our London-Middlesex Branch if you go to: www.rwto.org and click on Branch News and scroll down to our Branch.

Thank you to our photographers: *Kaye Harries, Bernarda Norwood and Patricia Savage*

Education Fund *contributed by Mara Hitchins*

In the fall, we donated to the Kiwanis Music Festival and to El Sistema Aeolian Hall School of Music. On May 28th, 2013 the Kiwanis Music Festival **Stars of the Festival Awards Concert** was held at Centennial Hall. Jennifer White, the winner of the Senior Plaque for Speech Arts was most grateful to receive this award. In her thank you letter, Jennifer wrote: “Your investment in the future of young artists is truly appreciated and enables the training necessary to pursue a fruitful career in the performing arts.” Your donations from last spring have made it possible for us to donate solo trophies and monetary recognition to the winners of each division in Speech Arts for this coming year.

At our November Christmas meeting, we welcomed the Aeolian Hall School of Music chamber ensemble. The six young musicians along with their teachers performed Mozart’s *Little Night Music* and their performance was well received by our members. Santa Claus and his elves not only brought presents for our members but special gifts for the six student performers. Clark Bryan and his group were most impressed with our organization.

Thank you for your contributions to the Education Fund. Without your support we would not be able to reach out to organizations such as these. It is important that the London-Middlesex Branch supports the community and in turn we are recognized within the community, as an organization that is “Caring and Sharing”.



Santa, Juanita Johnsson, Karen Tierney and Nicholas Carlucci, November 28, 2013



El Sistema Aeolian Hall School of Music

The RWTO/OERO Convention is being held in the great city of Ottawa on June 3 - 5, 2014 at the Travelodge Hotel and Conference Centre. Go to www.rwto.org and click on Convention 2014 for more information.

We encourage all members to consider going to this convention to learn more about our provincial branches, dine in luxury, enjoy the tours and relax in the hotel water park and wave pool.





MURIEL COBLEIGH - April 1, 2013

Muriel was the beloved wife of the late Harold Cobleigh (1977) and the late Robert Donaldson (1947) and the much loved mother of Ilene and Brent Bamford of London. Formerly from Lucan, she was in her ninety-sixth year. Muriel enjoyed her career teaching primary grades in public school in Lucan Biddulph.

BARBARA CRINKLAW - June 6, 2013

Barbara had great integrity and was an honest, reliable and dedicated teacher. She tried to keep in touch with her former students and their families. She was a historian and a true friend. She was interested in all people and had a favourite saying, "All the best!"

RETA MAE ALLAN - June 12, 2013

Reta was the beloved wife of the late Hugh T. Allan (2002). She was the much loved and admired mother of Bill and Sue Allan of Glencoe, Jan Allan (Wayne Abbot) of Glencoe and Bruce and Lynne Allan of Calgary, Alberta. Reta always had a smile and a positive word to say about everyone. She was caring, compassionate and family-oriented. She was a valued, trusted member of the community.

JUDITH MARION HODGINS-SLOAN - August 5, 2013

Judith was the loving wife of Arthur Sloan of London and the daughter of Marion (Whiting) and the late Bruce (1995) Hodgins of Parkhill. Judy taught for the City of London for thirty-three years. She loved to travel and hike but her special passions were her family, her St. Michael's family, photography, genealogy and especially, Scottish Country dancing.

MARY CHRISTINE HUSTON - September 21, 2013

Mary was the beloved wife of the late Archie (2010) and the loving and cherished Mom of Heather Hardie. Mary is fondly remembered by Archie's children and grandchildren. Mary started her thirty-five year teaching career in Centralia and was a Grade One teacher in London at St. George's, Ryerson, Hutton and Broughdale schools.

In retirement, Mary volunteered her time at Fanshawe Pioneer Village and the Museum of Ontario Archaeology, London.

JOYCE MURIEL ATTWELL - October 29, 2013

Joyce was called home to be reunited with her devoted husband, Bert (2012). Her family was central to her life and each child, grandchild and great grandchild was unique, special and loved. Joyce loved to spend family vacations camping and going on canoe trips. Throughout her life, Joyce continued to befriend people and make them feel loved. She generously supported missions both in her community and around the world.

Caring and Sharing

contributed by Jane Williams

This fall, we celebrated many happy events in our London-Middlesex Branch. Margaret Virtue turned ninety on September 18th. Juanita Johnsson became a great grandmother to a little boy on October 8th, 2013. We always knew she was a *great* grandmother and now she has a *great* grandson to prove it.



In October, Norma Dunbar-Skillen, who has written a book of poetry, sold copies at our meeting. Norma donated the proceeds of this book sale to our RWTO/OERO Branch. On November 3rd, Norma Bice turned ninety years old. We were also happy to welcome back in November, our choir director, Lois Peters, after her illness. Lois, you are amazing! We look forward to seeing everyone in March and catching up on winter activities.

Membership *contributed by Elizabeth Van Dongen*

Through the New Members" Tea held in October at the Faculty of Education, ten retirees joined our unit and there are 184 members now on the roster. There are nine 90 Plus members, two of whom had their one hundredth birthdays in 2013. Another group of nine members who contributed long-time service to the unit but are now unable to attend meetings were made Life Members with their dues paid.

Since mid-spring, the loss of six members has occurred: Reta Allan, Joyce Attwell, Muriel Cobleigh, Barbara Crinklaw, Judith Hodgins-Sloan and Mary Huston. Their passing is mourned by their RWTO family.

The Keeping In Touch Group with Nancy Bell as convener has sixteen volunteers who visit our shut-ins in teams of two. Currently, ten members are visited and receive a small gift along with shared conversation. The visiting team leaves an RWTO calling card with their names and the date of the visit so family members are informed.

The Friendship Group held a lovely Christmas dinner at West Haven Golf and County Club on December 5th, organized by Sandra McKeen and Karen Tierney.

Congenial luncheon meetings with food, friendship and fun provide informative speakers, entertainment, shopping and charitable opportunities. We regularly attract almost 60% of the membership.

The March meeting presents Rebecca Coulter, researcher and author from the Faculty of Education, who will 'Celebrate Women Teachers'. See you there!

Membership Fees: April 2014 - April 2015 contributed by Mary Maxwell

Mary Maxwell will begin depositing membership fees for 2014 - 2015 after April 1, 2014.

Fees are \$43.00 (\$40.00 Provincial plus \$3.00 local) for those who retired after 1980.

Retirements prior to August 31, 1980 pay \$18.00 (\$15.00 Provincial and \$3.00 local). If you wish, you may pay at meetings or send a cheque to:

Mary Maxwell 1673 Phillbrook Crescent London, ON N5X 2Z4

Make cheques payable to: **RWTO London-Middlesex Branch**

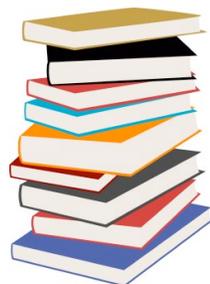
Please let Mary know if you have a change of address, telephone number and/or e-mail address.

*I wish for you...
comfort on difficult days
smiles when sadness intrudes
rainbows to follow the clouds
laughter to kiss your lips
sunsets to warm your heart
gentle hugs when spirits sag
friendship to brighten your being
beauty for your eyes to see
confidence for when you doubt
faith so that you can
believe
courage to know
yourself
patience to accept
the truth
and love to
complete your life.*



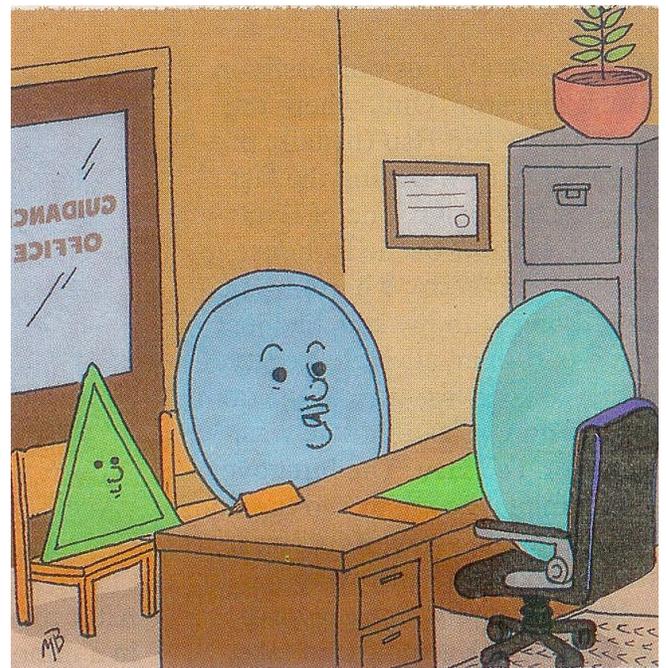
*I will ask the Lord to bless
you
As I prayed for you today
To guide you and to protect you
As you go along your way.
His love is always with you
His promises are true
You know He will see us through
So when the road you're traveling on
Seems difficult at best
God will do the rest.*

courtesy of Lois Peters



Your editor's favourite joke:

A duck, a skunk and a deer went out for dinner at a restaurant one night. When it came time to pay, the skunk did not have a scent and the deer did not have a buck so they put the meal on the duck's bill.



"I'd like my son to get a well-rounded education, and your school fits the bill nicely."

Please remember to bring your used books to the March meeting. This is a wonderful way to raise funds for our Branch and your support is very much appreciated.